12/7/74

Dear Bob Deagan,

I have some understanding of your problem and your quest but not the answer.

I have been on both sides, writing and making news and why the press, meaning ownership and control, is what it is I can't really figure. Too often I've seen what it does to honest men.

I learned when I was a kid, working on the Wilmington a.m. and the city editor called me aside after I put a good feature on his hook and told me, "Son, Mr. Dupont (Pierre, that is) wouldn't like this." He saw my surprise - my first such experience - and made a suggestion, which is how I became a by-line syndicated writer (old Phila. Ledger syndicate - long before your time) before I was old enough to vote.

Before I went into O.S.S. I was Washington correspondent for Click, then the third largest picture magazine. Annenberg, the same Walter running with his dad in jail. Did a really sensational series of Nazi cartel exposes. He loved the prestige, all those lovely letters from Washington, from the White House and cabinet offices and Congress, until he got pressure from the America First banks that held his debt and flack from the Main Line society of which he was part. He wound up liquidating the one magazine I ever knew to make money on circulation alone.

Without these experiences I'd never have been able to make successes of the earlier books and the current one would remain unknown. With the new I had to be able to work around national desks, which regard themselves as the most informed and important branch of government.

But for the first time ever no smide cracks. Not one has reached me from any paper, editorial, politician or unwilling-to-believer.

And more radio time, all by phone, than ever, news beepers and talk shows. This is the only way I can sell the book, with not a cent for travel or promo or ads.

Night before last most of three hours to a Dallas talk show and yesterday a.m. to Honolulu.

What also is different this time is little reaction I can identify as youth. Always before extensive college reaction. This time I've done a number of college stations without a single order. Almost all the checks are Mr. and Mrs. There were no college statoons with the earlier books but numerous appearances.

As of now almost any time early in the year will be fine. Eastalco is near here but I've never been there. Beginning 1/2/75 my wife begins the only regular income-producing work we have, as a tax consultant until mid-April. I take her into town in the a.m. and bring her home at night. Otherwise I'm almost always home.

Sorry you are not with one of Fairchild's that could use a story. We've still got to pay back the $6,000 we borrowed for the printer alone!

Please let me know in advance when you plan to come because if the book keeps going steadily as it is there may be some speaking invitations. I have one for 1/9 now. And the work I've done on the Ray case may be in the news again about the first of the year. We've been to the Supreme Court (once) and won, are there now and will be there again. Meanwhile, federal district court should be handing down a decision on whether he will get a trial around the first of the year. It is based on my investigation, for and after the book and currently, with unprecedented discovery under habeas corpus.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg